



Women Medical College Abbottabad

Policy#WMC/Admin/24-25/002
Version 2.0

133

Women Medical College Anti-Harassment Policy

Contents

Contents

Preamble	2
1. Aims.....	3
2. Objectives.....	3
3. Scope.....	3
4. Introduction	3
5. Definitions:.....	3
6. Harassment.....	3
7. Sexual Harassment	4
8. Bullying/ Ragging/ Hazing.....	4
9. Cyber-bullying	4
10. Designated Resources.....	5
11. Complaint or Reporting.....	5
12. Resolution Procedures	5
13. Informal.....	5
14. Formal	5
15. Communication and Compliance with Policy	6
16. Counseling	6
17. Update of Policy	7
18. Approvals of Policy	7



PREAMBLE

Women Medical College (here in after referred to as ('WMC')) is guaranteed to be a safe space for all those who inhabit the institution in any capacity. To this end, any harassment, sexual or otherwise, is strictly prohibited under WMC policy and national law.

WMC affirms the right of every member of the WMC Community to live, study, and working an environment that is free from harassment. Behavior constituting sexual harassment as defined in this Policy is incompatible with all recognized standards of professional ethics and with behavior appropriate to an institution of higher learning.

Harassment is a violation of human rights, is demeaning to human dignity and is unacceptable in a healthy work and academic environment, specifically one in which scholarly pursuit may flourish. WMC will not tolerate harassment of any member of the WMC Community and will strive through education and deterrence to create an environment free from such behavior on its premises.

In furtherance of the above objectives, this Policy constitutes a harassment Protection committee which will help ensure a campus free from violations of human dignity; to clearly demarcate the limits of acceptable behaviour at any time on campus; to establish a functional, swift, fair and permanent mechanism for filing complaints of harassment, investigation of these complaints and redress of instances of harassment as defined by this Policy. WMC Anti harassment policy strictly follows the Higher Education Commission policy on protection against sexual harassment in higher education institutions 2020 and The Protection Against Harassment at Workplace Act 2010 (Amended 2022).

In line with the "Protection against Harassment of Women at the Workplace Act, 2010 (Amendment, 2022) " and "The Higher Education Commission Policy on Protection Against Sexual Harassment in Higher Education Institutions 2020".

Before lodging a complaint, please read the following documents

1. The Protection Against Harassment at Workplace Act 2010.
2. The Protection Against Harassment at Workplace Act 2010 (Amended 2022).
3. "The Higher Education Commission Policy on Protection Against Sexual Harassment in Higher Education Institutions 2020".
4. Notification of Harassment Inquiry Committee.



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AIM

To address and prevent antagonistic situations that may violate the dignity of employees of WMC, Abbottabad.

OBJECTIVES

1. To create and maintain a work environment in which employees are treated with dignity, decency and respect.
2. To create a working environment based on mutual trust.
3. To promote a culture of openness, with no fear of retaliation as a victim.
4. To punish the culprits through enforcement of this policy.

SCOPE

This policy applies to all employees & students of Women Medical College, Abbottabad.

INTRODUCTION

1. Women medical college, Abbottabad recognizes that a safe and respectful working environment is imperative for healthy growth of institution and employees. For this purpose, healthy learning and culture of mutual respect must co-exist.
2. We are committed to provide our students and employees with an environment that is free from all forms of harassment, intimidation, bullying, ragging/hazing, discrimination and exploitation.
3. Each student enrolled in college or a person employed is responsible for fostering mutual respect and dignity for being familiar with this policy and for refraining conduct that violates this policy.

DEFINITIONS

No policy document can give an exhaustive description and/or definition of behaviors that fall within the ambit of harassment. This set of definitions is meant to serve as a guide for acts that will be considered as contravening the spirit and intent of the College Guiding Principles.

1. Harassment

Any unwelcome conduct, verbal and/or physical, towards a student because of his/her age, level, marital status, national/ethnic origin, sex, creed, caste, Colour, religion, disability, gender identity, sexual orientation or any other reason when such conduct creates an intimidating, hostile or offensive learning environment. Targeting student(s) because of being physically or mentally challenged shall also constitute an act of harassment, examples of which may include but are not in any way limited to:

- a. Ridicule, derogatory comments, inappropriate jokes and insults.
- b. Unwarranted behaviour that is shown towards a student that has the impact of making that student feel that her respect and dignity has been violated.
- c. Display or circulation of materials and/or pictures, physically or electronically (e.g., via email, SMS, social media, etc.) which are degrading, sexually promiscuous and intimidating.
- d. Shouting at a student, using insulting and abusive language, humiliating or publicly condemning/criticizing her competence.
- e. Quid pro quo "a favour or advantage granted in return for something" (demanding a favor, act or service, that the recipient states they will repay in some way).

2. Sexual Harassment

Sexual harassment includes any unwelcome sexual advance, request for sexual favors by verbal, written or other means of communication, physical conduct of a sexual nature or a sexually demeaning attitude that interferes with the victim's work/ academic performance; or creates an intimidating, hostile, offensive work/study/learning environment in which continuation of a course of study is conditional to compliance and refusal results in punitive action.

- a. Sexual harassment includes inappropriate gazing at a person's body, unsolicited physical contact including but not limited to touching, patting or pinching.
- b. Verbal conduct of a sexual nature may include but not limited to:
 - 1) Unwelcome verbal advances, sexually oriented comments about physical appearance, requests for sexual favors and continued suggestions for private social activity after it has been made clear that such requests and suggestions are unwelcome.
- c. Offensive verbal conduct could also include jokes of a sexual nature, offensive flirtation or lewd remarks of a sexual nature, such as expressions of sexual interest that are addressed directly to the student.
- d. Invasion of personal space (standing too close).
- e. Non-verbal conduct of a sexual nature may include the display of or forced to see sexually suggestive pictures, objects or written material, or sexually suggestive gestures. Verbal or non-verbal conduct that creates a sexually offensive learning environment also constitutes sexual harassment.
- f. Demanding sexual favors or sexually directed remarks / behaviour constitutes sexual harassment when submission to or rejection of such conduct is made, explicitly or implicitly, a basis for an academic decision.

3. Bullying/Ragging/Hazing

- a. Bullying means offensive, abusive; intimidating or insulting behaviour, abuse of power and/or unfair punitive sanctions which makes the student feel upset, threatened, humiliated and /or vulnerable, which undermines the student's self- confidence and/or reduces the student's feelings of self-esteem and self-worth, and which may cause the student to suffer stress.
- b. Ragging and /or hazing means the practice of using rituals and any other acts, conduct or practices by which the dominant power of senior students, former students or alumni, is brought to bear on students who are in any way considered junior by other students. Ragging and /or hazing include individual or collective acts or practices which include, but are not limited to:
 - 1) Involvement in physical or psychological assault or threat or use of force or wrongful confinement or restraint.
 - 2) Violating the status, dignity and honor of such students.
 - 3) Exposing students to ridicule and contempt and affect their self-esteem.
 - 4) Verbal abuse and aggression, indecent gestures and obscene behaviour.
 - 5) Breaching the confidentiality of any personal information related to the student.

4. Cyber-bullying

- a. Cyber-stalking is the use of the internet and mobile technology such as email, SMS text, social media or other electronic communications, to stalk and generally refers to a pattern of threatening or malicious behaviors, including communicating a credible threat of harm.
- b. Cyber-harassment usually pertains to un consented conduct such as threatening or harassing email messages, instant messages, or to social media and blog entries or websites dedicated solely to torment an individual. Cyber- harassment differs from cyber stalking in that it is generally defined as not involving a credible threat.



DESIGNATED RESOURCES

The WMC shall designate at least two members as the "Focal Persons" at least one of whom shall be a woman, to offer support and immediate assistance to those who have experienced sexual harassment. Contact information of such individuals shall be easily available, including on the WMC website.

COMPLAINT OR REPORTING

1. Women Medical College, Abbottabad encourages the reporting of all incidents of harassment, regardless, of who the alleged offender, may be. The college assures that all complaints that are reported will be taken seriously, will be investigated thoroughly and expeditiously and that all parties will be treated with respect.
2. As harassment usually occurs when individuals are alone, it is often difficult to produce evidence. It is strongly recommended that members of the college community report any offensive behaviour immediately to, or someone they trust, or seek guidance/help.
3. Students or employee, who either believe that they have become the victim of harassment or have witnessed harassment, should immediately report their concerns through any of the following routes:
 - a. Report to the any Focal Person of Anti-harassment Cell of WMC
 - b. Report to the any member of college Harassment Inquire Committee.
 - c. Report to the principal WMC.

RESOLUTION PROCEDURES

1. Informal Resolution

Informal resolution is aimed at bringing together the parties to discuss and resolve the complaint. A complainant who believes that he/she has been harassed may choose to discuss the matter with the person who has engaged in the behaviour and / or request that a member of his/her academic entity act as a liaison for an informal discussion with the involved student or member of faculty so as to resolve the matter.

2. Formal Resolution

Where a Complainant does not wish to pursue the informal resolution procedure or where the informal resolution procedure is unsuccessful, the formal resolution procedures should be undertaken.

Student/employee could, lodge a formal complaint with Chairperson Harassment Inquire Committee for assistance in pursuing the case.

- a. The college: Anti-Harassment Policy and investigation procedures shall be used in cases where a student charges another student with harassment or where a student charges a member of faculty/staff with harassment.
- b. The Focal Persons shall make temporary arrangement so that the complainant and accused don't interact with each other during investigation.
- c. Retaliation from either party shall be strictly monitored. During the process of the investigation, class and clinic schedules shall be strictly monitored. Any occurrence of retaliation by the accused shall result in suspension from the college.

INQUIRY PROCEDURES

The procedures noted in this section of the policy deal with formal inquiries where the harassment has taken place between students or where the harassment has taken place between a student and a member of faculty or staff.

1. All matters related to investigation of any charge of harassment will be undertaken in strict confidence to ensure confidentiality.



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2. Reports /complaints of harassment from students must be made in writing and signed by the complainant within 02 working days of the incident. It should include a factual description of the incident, including quotations of any offending language used. The complaint should then be submitted to Chairperson Harassment Inquire Committee.
3. The office receiving the complaint, 'in coordination with the respective academic entity head, will review the information provided by the complainant.
4. Once it has been determined that all of the relevant information has been provided, the Chairperson Harassment Inquire Committee will convene an investigating committee to consider the case.
5. Wherever possible, within five working days, from the day the charge is communicated, the respondent shall be requested to appear before the investigating committee for an interview, or submit a written defense. On her his failure to appear before the committee or to submit a written defense, without a reasonable cause, the committee shall precede Ex-Parte.
6. The Inquire Committee may request the attendance of appropriate individuals to appear before the committee in order to provide information pertinent to the case.
7. Both parties, the complainant and the individual who has been charged with harassment, shall have the right to be accompanied by a colleague/friend from within the institution.
8. The Inquire committee shall give its findings and recommendations in writing with appropriate reasons within 07 working days of the initiation of inquiry.
9. In cases where a student has been found guilty of harassment, the regulations noted in the college Student Code of Conduct and Disciplinary Procedures shall provide the penalty (penalties).
10. In cases where a member of faculty has been found guilty of harassment, the Inquire committee shall inform and provide its recommendation to the Chairperson Harassment Inquire Committee.
11. Chairperson Harassment Committee shall put up the report to the Principal WMC.
12. Principal shall call on the complainant and accused and shall communicate the decision of the committee to them.
13. Principal shall inform the respective HOD and HR department about the decision and its implementation.

COMMUNICATION AND COMPLIANCE WITH THE POLICY

The student affair department, the Provost, Members of Harassment Inquire committee, HR department and IT Department shall be responsible for wide dissemination of this policy. The anti-harassment policy shall be available on the website of WMC.

COUNSELING

1. Counseling services must be available to the victims of harassment.
2. These services should also be extended to the offender.